

# The Living Church

*A weekly record of the news, the work, and the thought of the Episcopal Church*

## The Great Betrayal

The Rev. Frederic S. Fleming, D.D.

Rector of Trinity Church in the City of New York

## Presentation of the Proposed Basis of Union

Majority Report of the Joint Commission on Approaches to Unity

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## Not Unity But Surrender

*Editorial*







# The Great Betrayal

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THE GREAT BETRAYAL seems to me to express what actually will have been accomplished if some members of our Church should succeed in their present program. It is not a pleasing prospect, and the time has come for us to meet the situation.

I am concerned with the resolution introduced at the General Convention of 1937, whereby the Episcopal Church proposed to explore the possibility of achieving organic union with one branch of the Presbyterian Church.\*

It is significant that there was no debate on this resolution; none of the many issues involved was discussed; and the whole plea was to support the committee presenting it. When the chief spokesman for the resolution, the Rev. Dr. Howard Chandler Robbins, was asked, repeatedly and categorically, whether we were committed to any definite program, he replied that we were committed to nothing! He went on to say that it was only a pious hope, and he felt that it could be considered without any idea of binding our Church to any obligation. How far we have since been drawn into commitments can be ascertained by the demand now being made upon us. We must remember that there was *no debate* on this resolution, and, when the question came before the General Convention of 1940, so much opposition was encountered that the Commission itself recommended that a new one be appointed. Again, in the General Convention of 1943, in the House of Deputies, a determined effort for debate was made by the then President of the House. Despite his efforts to provoke discussion, the House called for a vote which was taken without any discussion.

We now approach the General Convention in Philadelphia amid cries for union with the Presbyterian Church at any cost and without further delay! We are told that this union should be accomplished now, whatever the cost, because it is God's will. There is always a tendency to merge God's will with our

own desires, but it seems to many of us that this takes too much for granted. There is being read into some of our Lord's words a meaning and interpretation which may or may not be a true revelation of His purpose. We shall not

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¶ While the text of this article largely remains the same as the original publication in THE LIVING CHURCH, references are made herein to the Majority and Minority Reports of the Joint Commission on Approaches to Unity which were published after the article had been prepared, and which appeared in the same issue with the article.

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do well to try to force an interpretation of the will of God because it seems to accommodate the ends which some people may have before them.

It is evident that this attempt to achieve organic union with one branch of the Presbyterian Church is an indication of a feeling of unhappiness and discontent on the part of some of the clergy and laity of our Church. To put it bluntly, they find that the Book of Common Prayer commits them to a faith and obedience which they are not prepared to accept or to follow. There are so many evidences of this impatience with the faith and practice of the Church, as it is thus enshrined, that it has become a common thing for those who so disregard the Prayer Book to alter, or to misuse, or even to omit certain offices contained therein, and to substitute therefor something which happens to please them personally.

Those who pursue this policy quite naturally find themselves more at home with their Presbyterian brethren than with Episcopalians who remain loyal to the vows they took to uphold the faith and practice of their Church.

While the Majority and Minority Reports can be read in full in this pamphlet, I do feel it necessary to point out that a study of the Majority Report will show that it does not reflect a contribution of the best in the Episcopal and Presbyterian traditions of the ministry, but rather that it is predominantly Presbyterian. It ignores or seriously curtails the ministerial and teaching functions of the priesthood and the normal faculties

of the episcopate. The following excerpts are significant:

"The minister shall have oversight of the worship of the parish, with the advice of the Council. The Council shall be responsible for the spiritual upbuilding of the congregation. The Council shall have oversight of the religious education and of the various societies, agencies, and other activities of the parish."

"It [the Presbytery] shall have power to receive and examine candidates for the ministry. . . . It shall have power to install pastors in their charges, and to dissolve the pastoral relationship. The Presbytery shall have power to receive complaints against ministers and to arrange for their trial. . . . In general, it shall take order for whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under its care and for the spread of the Gospel."

There are those who are determined to force their own plans for union even at the cost of splitting the Episcopal Church and creating a bitter schism. *This is the great betrayal!* How much more honest it would be for those who are ready to renounce the Church—or who have already done so—to find their place in the Presbyterian Church without trying to "scuttle the ship" for those who would remain true to their ordination vows! No amount of special pleading can obliterate the sharp distinctions between Anglicanism and Presbyterianism.

In a recent publication, two outstanding Presbyterian ministers said†:

"The typical Presbyterian creed is the Westminster Confession of Faith, a long document originating in the Westminster Assembly of Divines, and revised from time to time. This is the fullest single statement of the Christian faith proposed by any Church, and it marks this Church preëminently as 'creedal' in type."

Again,

"All ministers in the Presbyterian Church are in one sense 'bishops,' but they are on a parity of authority, and so, in the usual sense of the word, there are no bishops in this Church."

And again,

"A Presbyterian minister is in no sense a 'priest' beyond any other sincere Christian believer."

Contrast these frank statements with the vows that a man takes when he is

\*That the Joint Commission on Approaches to Unity has far exceeded the authority vested in it is pointed out by the Minority Report of that Commission (included in this pamphlet) in which, as their first point, the signers say:

"We do not admit that the Commission was appointed, as has been asserted in some quarters, merely to be a negotiating committee to accomplish union with the Presbyterians immediately and at any price. . . . It is unthinkable that our Church could have voted to destroy its General Convention and to liquidate itself, all in the space of a few years, without at least some debate upon the subject and some opposition."

†*Why a Presbyterian Church?* by the Rev. Drs. Cleland B. McAfee and Eliot Porter. Philadelphia: Board of Christian Education, 1945.



made a "Priest in the Church of God." What does a priest mean when he declares, at his ordination, that he solemnly engages "to conform to the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America"? What does a bishop have in mind when he utters these words at his consecration:

"In the name of God, Amen. I, . . . . ., chosen Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in . . . . ., do promise conformity and obedience to the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. So help me God, through Jesus Christ."

Contrast them again with our understanding of the ministerial office as expressed in the actual Sentence of Ordination:

"Receive the Holy Ghost for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful Dispenser of the Word of God, and of his Holy Sacraments; In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

We believe that when a man is made a priest by the gift of the Holy Spirit at the imposition of hands by a bishop of the Church there is conveyed to him a certain spiritual faculty with which he is henceforth endowed and by which he is forever bound.

Contrast them again with the Preface in the service for "Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating Bishops, Priests, and Deacons according to the Order of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America":

"It is evident unto all men, diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church,—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. Which Offices were evermore had in such reverend estimation, that no man might presume to execute any of them, except he were first called, tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same . . . ."

I submit that these two sets of statements are diametrically opposed one to the other. In this connection I make an interesting observation. In my 35 years in the ministry of the Episcopal Church I have seen many Presbyterian ministers enter our priesthood. I do not happen to know of any priest of the Episcopal Church who became a Presbyterian minister. I am impressed by the fact that there have been men in the ministry of the Presbyterian Church who recognized something in our ministry which they did not find in their own.

Every true and loyal Episcopalian knows that what is quoted above is of the essence of our faith. We hold this

belief in common not only with the Anglican Communion, but with the Orthodox Churches throughout the world, as well as with every true branch of the Catholic Church.

#### THE PRESBYTERIAN ATTITUDE

That this rock upon which our Faith was founded will be shattered if those who would betray us should succeed, is well shown in a report of the 158th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, recently held in Atlantic City. I quote from the *New York Times* of May 25, 1946:

"Eight hundred clerical and lay commissioners heard with approval the assurances of the Rev. Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin of New York City that a proposed plan of merger with the Protestant Episcopal Church will be published within six weeks by the latter church and that it would contain mutual recognition of the ministry and safeguard the standards of both Churches. The united church would have both Bishops and Presbyteries functioning concurrently under a plan designed to invite the adherence of other communions, he said.

"The commissioners applauded the demand for 'action now' and the statement that some sort of union could be effected in two years, made by Charles J. Turck, president of MacAlester College, St. Paul, Minn. . . ."

"Disclosing for the first time a few details of the merger plan on which commissions of the Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches have been working since the Episcopal Church proposed it in 1937, Dr. Coffin said the plan would safeguard the Presbyterian Church and provide that when a minister is 'installed in a church the congregation may request the Bishop and the Presbytery to exact of him a promise to minister the doctrine and worship in accordance with the forms to which the congregation has been accustomed. There would be complete mutual recognition of ministry and an extension of authority to preach in the united church. The Episcopal Commission sought an extension of ordination, which was declined.

"The office of Bishop has been carefully coördinated with our Presbytery,' he explained, 'so that the Bishop would discharge many of his functions in concurrence with the Presbytery, in the ordination and installation of a pastor, and the dissolution of a pastoral relationship.'

"The Rev. Dr. Ralph Waldo Lloyd, president of Maryville College, Maryville, Tenn., . . . said . . . there would be no reordination of any kind, but Presbyterian doctrines and form of Government would be protected.

"Dr. Turck, an attorney, declared that 'laymen believe in church union and want action now.' . . . 'We as laymen might find that doctrinal points are irrelevant to merger. Laymen are not given to quibbling. We want action and we want it in our lifetime. We believe some kind of union can be worked out in the next two years.'"

When the announcement of a "proposed merger" to be published by the

Episcopal Church is made from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, *before* our own Commission on Approaches to Unity has made its official report, and before our own General Convention meets, it is apparent that there are members of the Episcopal Church who take it upon themselves to speak for the Church as a whole, and to commit it to a certain line of action. These same men are evidently in such positions in our Church that they can lead outsiders to believe that their personal view reflects the mind of the entire Church.

I submit that the nature of these proposals indicates plainly that we are not making for unity but disunity! If a majority of the House of Bishops and of the House of Deputies should vote to affiliate with only one of the several branches of the Presbyterian Church in this country this will not establish a union. Unless there is oneness of mind within the Church which Christ founded, there is no possibility of any man or group of men creating unity. Man can cause a schism, but he cannot produce an organism. Organic union must be preceded by identity of doctrine.

I submit again that we have indeed traveled a long way from the original proposal we were asked to consider with our Presbyterian brethren—that of exploring each other's views to see if there could be any possibility of bringing the two Churches into closer union.\* From the plans which the Presbyterian Church has officially and publicly announced, we see that the Episcopal Church has been committed to a plan of action which will lead only to disunion and schism. None of us wants to contemplate having such an issue forced upon either Church. Against such a betrayal I plead for a greater faith and a higher loyalty.

I hold that it is not union with the members of any one section of Christ's Church which is our goal, but reunion of the whole Church of Christ throughout the world! For this we are prepared to dedicate ourselves, in a firm faith that in God's own time this will be brought to pass. This is the only goal to which we can subscribe—not "union now" or "decision now" but waiting upon God's will in a faith that transcends any temporary expediency.

\*Among the numerous letters and other communications of appreciation which have reached me in connection with this article as it appeared in *THE LIVING CHURCH* of July 14th, there is a most pertinent statement by Bishop Perry of Rhode Island, which I quote:

"This is only a line of sincere and profound gratitude. You have spoken a long-awaited word at just the right moment in answer to the statement in the published Majority Report of the Joint Commission on Approaches to Unity. In my judgment, the basis of union set forth in the Majority Report has departed from the purport and intention of the resolution presented by me, as Presiding Bishop, on behalf of the General Convention, to the Presbyterians. The purpose was to be governed in our approaches to them by the principles and methods of the Conferences on Faith and Order."



# Presentation of the Proposed Basis of Union

## Majority Report of the Joint Commission on Approaches to Unity\*

### Part I

SINCE the General Convention of 1943 the Commission has had regular and well-attended meetings at which the various matters referred to it by General Convention have been fully and frankly discussed. Three times a special committee of the Commission has met with a like committee of the Presbyterian Department of Church Coöperation and Union, and once the entire Episcopal Commission has met in joint session with the Department.

Informal contacts have been maintained with representatives of the Methodist Church but there have been no meetings with them.

In all discussions and negotiations relative to union with the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America one effort has been made to give due consideration to two great underlying principles. First, the subject under discussion is not the coöperation or federation of the two Churches but organic union, and organic union means ultimately, to quote the language of a formal resolution adopted by the Commission at one of its meetings, "one Church, with one standard of faith, one communicant list, one ministry, one system of government."

This conception of the final goal before us, therefore, has directed all the discussions of the Commission and underlies the plan herewith submitted.

Secondly, the members of the Commission have sought to bear in mind that the enterprise now being carried on by the Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches is but one phase of that ecumenical movement in progress throughout Christendom. We have tried therefore to envisage not only the union of two particular communions, but also the ultimate reunion of all disciples of our Lord.

The Commission, in accordance with the instructions of the General Convention of 1943, has studied both the majority and the minority reports submitted by the Joint Commission to that Convention. It has also continued negotiations with the representatives of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America looking towards the organic union of the two bodies. Out of these studies and negotiations has come a plan entitled "A Proposed Basis of Union" which follows as a part of this report. This document still leaves a number of important issues for further negotiations—for example, the organiza-

tion of the General Assembly or Convention, and property and contractual rights. The latter problem has received careful preliminary study from a committee of this Commission.

The Commission has been assured by the Department of Church Coöperation and Union of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America that, in the event this General Convention shall refer the Proposed Basis of Union to the dioceses for study and report, the Department will propose similar action to the General Assembly of its Church in 1947.

Some of the members of this Commission are signing this report because they approve the plan in substance and are convinced that it is the proper basis for union and for the drafting of a constitution. Others are signing the report because they wish the clergy and laity to be given opportunity to face the issues it presents and to register judgment thereon, and not because they endorse or agree with the plan in all its details. All reserve the right to support or oppose the proposals in the light of further study, and when they are submitted for further action.

### Part II: The Proposed Basis of Union

#### *Between the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America and the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*

##### PREAMBLE

THROUGH the events of our time as well as through His revelation of His will in Jesus Christ, God is imperatively calling upon all who believe in Him to become one flock under one Shepherd, so that the world may believe in its Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. All the Churches stand at the bar of God's judgment. The unity of Christians is not merely a pious aspiration, it is essential if the Church is to live and to fulfil its mission both at home and abroad. It is not remote from the need of our age. Upon us the end of a world has come, and the events of the past decades have shown that unless the Church becomes increasingly effective in human affairs, as a united community of faith which transcends nationality, race, and class, and therefore can hold divided groups in coöperation, further and more destructive ideological wars are inevitable.

The aim of the negotiations between the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America is

to achieve such a basis of union that other Churches can adhere to it so that, if it be God's will, the union of the two Churches can be the nucleus of a more inclusive union. The united Church will seek to maintain fellowship with the Churches with which either of the uniting Churches is in communion, especially with the Churches of the two families, Anglican and Reformed, from which the uniting Churches have sprung.

The avowed goal of the negotiations is

\* The membership of the Commission is as follows: Bishop Strider of West Virginia (chairman), Bishop Fenner of Kansas, Bishop Keeler of Minnesota, Bishop Oldham of Albany, Bishop Sturtevant of Fond du Lac, Bishop Washburn of Newark, the Rev. Dr. C. R. Barnes of Los Angeles, the Rev. Dr. S. E. Johnson of Massachusetts, the Rev. Dr. L. C. Lewis of Pennsylvania, the Very Rev. Dr. C. W. Sprouse of West Missouri, the Rev. Dr. T. O. Wedel of Washington, the Very Rev. Dr. A. C. Zabriskie of Virginia (secretary), Mr. W. L. Balthis of Western North Carolina, Mr. H. T. Foulkes of Milwaukee, Dr. Alexander Guerry of Tennessee, Mr. J. G. Mitchell of New York, Mr. J. C. Spaulding of Michigan, and Professor G. F. Thomas of New Jersey.

organic union. That term implies that when the unifying process is complete there will be one Church, with one standard of faith, one communicant list, one ministry, one system of government. The essential purpose is to find a means whereby each uniting Church may contribute its heritage of faith, order, and practice to the united body and each may recognize and be assured that those things which are precious to its people are preserved in the united Church.

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The following articles are proposed by the representatives of the two Churches for study, and if adopted will become the basis for further negotiations looking toward the drafting of a constitution.

##### I. DOCTRINE

###### 1. General Statement.

Both Churches accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God. The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed set forth and further defined by the first four General Councils of the



undivided Church, are to be received as the statement of the Church's belief. The Confession of Faith and the Catechisms, and the Book of Common Prayer with the Articles of Religion, are recognized as containing the system of doctrine taught in Holy Scriptures as the uniting Churches have respectively received it.

The Basis of Union permits any teacher of the united Church to use for the instruction of the faithful any teaching in the formularies authorized in either of the uniting Churches before the union, provided that such teaching is consistent with the Basis of Union and such doctrinal standards as may be officially set forth by the united Church, and provided also that whenever definite conflicts are disclosed between the formularies of the two uniting Churches, such conflicting teachings shall not be taught as necessary to salvation or so as to break fellowship in the united Church.

## 2. Specific statements.

(a) The Triune God. God, the Lord of the universe and of history, has revealed Himself as one God in three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

(b) The Incarnate Word. Jesus Christ, truly God and perfect Man, is the Founder and living Head of the Church.

(c) The Bible. The Holy Scriptures are the record of God's revelation of Himself for the redemption of man, and are the supreme sources for our knowledge of Him and of His will. The truth of such knowledge is attested by the Holy Spirit in the corporate witness of the Church and in the hearts of Christians, who by Him are led to understand and obey the Word of God.

(d) The Church. The visible Church is the fellowship of all those, together with their children, who, being baptized, profess faith in Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord; which fellowship is responsible to Him for the proclamation of the Gospel, for the perpetuation of the ministry which He gave it, for the use of the Sacraments instituted by Him, for the maintenance of its unity as His Body in the Spirit of love, and for the promotion of God's righteousness in the world. It was constituted by Christ as a fellowship of disciples united with Him, and in Him with one another, to be His witnesses and the servants of His kingdom on earth.

(e) The Sacraments. The two Sacraments ordained by Christ, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, are sure witnesses to the mighty acts of God and are means of grace appropriated by faith. Baptism is a sign and seal of God's covenant in Christ, of ingrafting into Him, of remission of sins by His death, of regeneration by His Spirit, and of incorporation into His Church. In the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion, Christ communicates Himself to His people for their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace, and maintains the bond of fellowship whereby Christian people are joined to one another and to their Lord. The Lord's Supper shows forth the Lord's death till He come. It is offered as the memorial of His sacrifice which He commanded us to make, in which the faithful also offer themselves as a living sacrifice to God through Him.

(f) The Ministry. Christ supplies the Church, of which He is the living Head, with a ministry continuous through the

centuries and empowered by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Word and minister the Sacraments. The Church thankfully receives this ministry and through it exercises the prophetic, priestly, and pastoral functions committed to the Church by its Lord.

## II. GOVERNMENT

### 1. General Statement.

There shall be in the united Church a series of graduated councils (or judicatories). Such councils shall be established within the parish, within the diocese or presbytery, and within the province or synod; and there shall be a supreme judicatory, the General Assembly or Convention.

### 2. Specific Statements.

#### (a) Councils. (Judicatories)

(1) Within the Parish. The Parish Council shall consist of the minister or ministers of the parish, and the ruling elders elected by the congregation. The minister shall have oversight of the worship of the parish, with the advice of the Council. The Council shall be responsible for the spiritual upbuilding of the congregation. The Council shall have oversight of the religious education and of the various societies, agencies, and other activities of the parish. It may recommend candidates for confirmation, examine and receive persons into the life of the parish, and commend them, upon removal, to other congregations. A congregation, either directly or through its Parish Council, may elect one or more wardens and delegate to the wardens such powers and duties as may be deemed desirable.

(2) Within the Diocese or Presbytery. The Presbytery (Convention) shall consist of the Bishop or Bishops, all the presbyters (priests) within the diocese, and ruling elders delegated by the Parish Councils to represent the congregations; provided that congregations which have not previously had ruling elders shall, during a period of time to be specified in the Constitution, have the right to send other representatives; and such representatives also shall be eligible for election to the higher councils of the Church. The Bishop of the diocese, or, in his absence, the assistant Bishop, if there be one, shall be its presiding officer or moderator. The Presbytery shall elect its bishop or bishops. It shall have power to receive and examine candidates for the ministry. At ordinations, clerical representatives of the Presbytery shall participate with the Bishop in the laying on of hands. It shall have power to install pastors in their charges, and to dissolve the pastoral relationship. The Presbytery shall have power to receive complaints against ministers and to arrange for their trial. It shall enact a constitution and canons binding within its jurisdiction, provided that they are consistent with the laws of the united Church; and it shall provide for judicial procedures to deal with questions of discipline arising therefrom. In general, it shall take order for whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under its care and for the spread of the Gospel. It may appoint standing committees and prescribe their functions and powers.

(3) Within the Province or Synod. The Province shall consist of six or more dioceses. Its council, the Synod, shall consist of representatives [bishops, presbyters

(priests), and ruling elders] from all the Presbyteries within the Province. It is the intermediate council (judicatory) between the Presbytery and the General Assembly; and its forms of organization, powers, and responsibilities shall be as provided in the Constitution of the united Church.

(4) The General Assembly (Convention). The supreme council (judicatory) of the united Church shall be a General Assembly (Convention) which shall be composed of bishops, presbyters (priests), and ruling elders, and shall exercise appropriate powers and functions according to a plan to be set forth in the Constitution of the united Church.

## III. MINISTRY AND LAY LEADERSHIP

### 1. General Statement.

In accordance with the following general principles, the Constitution will make provision so that all men ordained after the effective date of the union will bear the authority of both traditions. It will also provide that ministers who have been ordained in either Church prior to the effective date of the union will receive the authority of the other.

### 2. The Clergy.

(a) The Episcopate. Bishops shall have the powers and duties traditionally theirs, and these shall be set forth in the Constitution. These powers and duties, exercised in concurrence with the Presbytery, shall include supervision of public worship, discipline, and leadership in the spread of the Gospel. As Chief Pastor, the Bishop shall exercise oversight of the Churches and their teaching, shall administer Confirmation, and, with clerical members of the Presbytery, shall officiate at ordinations of presbyters (priests) and deacons on behalf of the whole Church. He shall preside at or take order for meetings of the Presbytery, (Diocesan Convention), and at inductions and installations and similar offices, and shall counsel with pastors and with candidates for the ministry.

The office of a bishop is also a teaching office, and he should do all in his power for the edification of the presbyters (priests) and congregations of whom he has oversight by instructing them or providing for their instruction concerning the truths of the Christian faith. Also on each bishop in his diocese, and on the Bishops of the Church as a body, is laid the responsibility of publicly witnessing to the doctrine of the Church and of urging its application to the conditions of the age.

There are within the uniting Churches differing views and beliefs regarding episcopacy, which have been recognized throughout the negotiations. Episcopacy is a form of Church government which has persisted through the centuries; and while differing views and beliefs have been held regarding it, and will be permitted in the united Church, it is agreed that the continuity of the episcopate which has come down from the undivided Church shall be effectively maintained, both at the inauguration of the union and thereafter.

(b) The Presbyterate. In the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments of the Gospel presbyters (priests) share equally with bishops. Their responsibilities are preaching and teaching the Word of God, officiating at the Sacraments and in the services of public worship, the ministry of reconciliation and the cure of souls, the



leadership of parishes, and the fulfilment of other ministries, to which they have been duly called. As members of the presbytery, they shall participate with the bishop in the government of the Church. They shall serve in the higher councils of the Church when elected thereto.

At such time as the union is effected, in every diocese and presbytery there shall be normal services of mutual recognition and extension of authority to minister in the united Church. The Moderator of the presbytery and his attending presbyters shall lay their hands upon the Episcopal bishops and priests to be commissioned; likewise the Bishop and his attending presbyters will lay their hands upon the Presbyterian ministers to be commissioned. The Moderator or Bishop shall use the form following:

*Here the Moderator or Bishop shall say to the minister to be commissioned:*

The ministry of the Word and Sacraments which thou hast already received is hereby recognized; and the grace and authority of Holy Orders as conferred by this Church are now added.

*Then the Moderator or Bishop with attending presbytery shall lay hands on the minister to be commissioned and say:*

Take thou authority to execute thy ministry and to dispense the Word of God and His holy Sacraments in this united Church; in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

(c) The Diaconate. Candidates for the ministry shall first be ordained to the diaconate, and shall generally be continued in this status for one year. Before such ordination the candidate shall have a probationary period, the length of which shall be within the discretion of the Presbytery of jurisdiction, and shall meet such spiritual, intellectual, and other requirements as the Constitution of the united Church shall prescribe.

Deacons shall have the right to preach and teach under the license and supervision of the bishop and presbytery, and to distribute the elements at an administration of the Holy Communion when requested by a presbyter (priest).

### 3. The Laity

To the whole Church of God and to every member of it belongs the duty and privilege of spreading the good news of the Kingdom of God and the message of salvation through Jesus Christ and of interceding for the brethren. All, according to their measure, share in the priesthood which the Church derives from Him.

(a) Congregations. The uniting churches recognize the right of congregations to select their pastor or pastors, either directly or through officers chosen by themselves as each congregation may determine, subject to such discretion as the Constitution may vest in the bishop and presbytery. The laity shall also take their appropriate part in the election of other officers and in the general government of the Church. Administration of the property and temporal affairs of parishes may be vested in the parish councils; or these duties may be committed to wardens and vestrymen, or trustees, in accordance with applicable ecclesiastical or civil law.

(b) Ruling Elders. Ruling elders are

the lay representatives of the people, chosen by them for the purpose of exercising government and discipline in conjunction with presbyters (priests) or pastors. They shall be communicants of faith, wisdom, and character. They shall serve with presbyters (priests) in the superior councils of the Church when elected thereto. They shall take vows of loyalty to the doctrine and government of the Church, and shall be set apart by prayer and the laying on of hands by a presbyter (priest). A ruling elder, duly examined and qualified for such service, may be commissioned by the bishop and presbytery to have pastoral charge of a congregation having no minister. The Constitution may authorize the setting apart of laymen as ruling elders for membership in the higher councils of the Church or for performance of special duties without first serving in the Council of the Parish.

(c) Lay Deacons. Congregations which so desire may elect lay deacons and deaconesses. These may be set apart to serve the church, under appropriate vows, in its ministry of teaching, social service, and charity.

## IV. OTHER BASIC PROVISIONS

1. Baptism. Baptism by water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is the method by which candidates are incorporated into the Church.

A profession of faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, as Lord and Saviour shall be required of adult candidates for baptism, and of parents or sponsors of young children presented for this Sacrament; and parents or sponsors shall also promise to do their utmost, with God's help, to rear baptized children in the Christian faith and life.

2. Confirmation. Confirmation is a rite through which increase of grace is bestowed by the Holy Spirit and by which baptized persons publicly renew their baptismal vows, assume for themselves the full responsibilities of Church membership, and are admitted to the Holy Communion. Candidates for adult baptism and for confirmation shall be carefully instructed in the Christian faith and in the obligations of Church membership, and shall be examined and approved by the minister and parish council as to their knowledge and faith.

The rite shall be administered by the laying on of hands, with prayer, by the bishop, or by a presbyter (priest) duly authorized by the bishop and presbytery.

3. The Lord's Supper. In the celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, bread and wine shall be used, and every rite in the united Church shall contain at least the following:

(a) A confession of sin and a declaration of God's forgiveness.

(b) A commemoration of the Lord's death and passion, and the recital of His words and acts in the institution of the Sacrament, in or with

A prayer of thanksgiving and consecration;

A presentation of the elements to God and a self offering of the communicants;

An invocation of the Holy Spirit upon

the elements and the congregation;

The Lord's Prayer.

(c) The Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed on appropriate occasions.

4. Ordination. In all ordinations and consecrations the true ordainer is God, Who, in response to the prayers of His Church, and through the words and acts of its representatives, commissions and empowers for the office and work to which they are called the persons whom the Church has selected.

In every ordination service there shall be the imposition of hands, with prayer, an authorization to minister, and a designation of the office to which the candidate is being ordained.

All ordinations of presbyters (priests) and deacons shall be by the bishop and the presbyters (priests) of the presbytery of jurisdiction, who shall join in the laying on of hands.

In the service of consecration of bishops in the united Church there shall be: (1) the solemn presentation of the person (or persons) to be consecrated to the bishops who are taking part in the consecration by two presbyters (priests) of the diocese to which the candidate is elected (or, if a missionary bishop, the presbytery of which he is a member); (2) a prayer of consecration, asking that the person to be consecrated may receive the gift of God's Holy Spirit for the office and work of a bishop in His Church; and (3) the laying on of hands by the bishops (who shall be at least three in number) and presbyters (priests) representing the presbytery of jurisdiction.

In every ordination and consecration, vows shall be taken to maintain the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God and as containing all things necessary to salvation, and to minister the doctrine, Sacraments, and discipline of the Church in accordance with its constitution.

When a congregation shall so request, the bishop and presbytery shall require of the pastor-elect a promise to minister the doctrine and worship in accordance with the forms to which the parish is accustomed. In all such cases the bishop and presbytery shall insure that such conditions are fulfilled.

## V. WORSHIP

### 1. General Statement.

It is anticipated that in due time the united Church will have a common service book which will express the unity and breadth of its faith and life, and which will result naturally from fellowship in the united Church. This will include a variety of forms, liturgical and non-liturgical, to meet the needs of various parishes and groups in the Church, and to preserve the distinctive values in the two traditions of worship. There are sacramental rites, Confirmation, Marriage, Absolution, Ordination, and the Anointing of the Sick, which minister God's grace to those who receive them in faith, and they will continue to be available in the united Church. No attempt will be made to abolish diversity of worship, but forms of public worship and usages connected with them which have been authorized or permitted in either of the uniting Churches under the Book of Common Prayer or the Directory for the Public Worship of God



and the Book of Common Worship, may be continued. No change shall be made in the worship of any parish without the agreement of the pastor and congregation, and the approval of the bishop and presbytery.

## 2. The Liturgical Commission.

(a) The Constitution shall provide for a standing Liturgical Commission.

For a period of twenty-five years after the adoption of the Constitution, and thereafter until otherwise provided by amendment to the Constitution, this Commission shall be composed of twenty members, divided into two sections of ten members each, herein to be designated as Sections A and B. Section A shall consist of ministers [presbyters (priests) and bishops] and ruling elders (in proportions to be determined later) chosen from among those who customarily use the Directory for Public Worship of God and the Book of Common Worship. Section B shall consist of three bishops, three presbyters

(priests), and four laymen, chosen from among those who customarily use the Book of Common Prayer.

(b) The two sections of the Commission, sitting together, shall prepare a book to be offered to the General Assembly (Convention) for adoption as the common service book of the united Church. This book shall contain liturgical services, directions for worship, orders of service with provision for the use of extempore prayers, services for special occasions, and forms for the administration of the Sacraments and for other rites and ceremonies.

(c) Until such time as this book may be adopted and promulgated, for the fostering of unity and other special purposes the Liturgical Commission may set forth forms of worship which any presbytery may authorize for use in the diocese.

(d) In order to safeguard the existing forms of worship until a common service

book shall be adopted, the two sections of the Liturgical Commission shall from time to time sit separately. Section A shall have sole power to recommend to the General Assembly (Convention) amendments to the Book of Common Worship and the Directory, Section B shall have sole power to recommend to the General Assembly (Convention) amendments to the Book of Common Prayer. It may also make recommendations for the enforcement of the Prayer Book's provisions.

(e) Nothing in this article shall be construed as giving authority to the Liturgical Commission to abridge the freedom in forms of worship assured in Section 1.

## VI. PROPERTY AND CONTRACT RIGHTS

(Qualified committees of both Churches should give further careful study to matters relating to property and contract rights as they would be affected by the union of the two Churches.)

The Commission recommends the adoption of the following resolutions:

1. Resolved, the House of ..... concurring, that the Joint Commission on Approaches to Unity be continued, and that it be directed to continue negotiations with the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and to further or initiate such conversations with representatives of other Christian bodies as in its judgment may lead to our closer fellowship with them.

2. Resolved, the House of ..... concurring, that the accompanying document "The Proposed Basis of Union between the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America and the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America" is hereby received and submitted as worthy of the serious study of the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of our Church; and that looking forward to decisive action by the General Convention of 1949, the Secretary of the House of Bishops and the Secretary of the House of Deputies shall transmit to the Bishop of each Diocese and Missionary District, and

to the Secretaries of the Conventions of the several Dioceses and Missionary Districts, respectively, "The Proposed Basis of Union" for study and report.

3. Resolved, the House of ..... concurring, that it shall be the duty of each Diocese and Missionary District to formulate and to execute such plans as in its judgment will best promote thorough and systematic study of "The Proposed Basis of Union" by its Clergy and Laity.

4. Resolved, the House of ..... concurring, that it shall be the duty of the Ecclesiastical Authority of each Diocese and Missionary District to forward the results of the study undertaken therein to the Presiding Bishop ten months before the General Convention of 1949, and that the Presiding Bishop be requested to transmit these reports to the Joint Commission on Approaches to Unity.

5. Resolved, the House of ..... concurring, that the Presiding Bishop be requested to present the Proposed Basis of Union to the meeting of the Lambeth Conference in 1948 for its consideration and advice.

6. Resolved, the House of ..... concurring, that in its report to General Convention of 1949, the Joint Commission on Approaches to Unity shall include a statement of the results of the studies undertaken in the several Dioceses and Missionary Districts.

7. Resolved, the House of ..... concurring, that the Treasurer of General Convention be directed to provide the sum of \$6,000.00 for the expenses of the Commission on Approaches to Unity during the coming triennium.

(Rt. Rev.) R. E. L. STRIDER,  
(Rt. Rev.) STEPHEN E. KEELER,  
(Rt. Rev.) BENJ. M. WASHBURN,  
(Rev.) SHERMAN E. JOHNSON,  
(Rev.) THEODORE O. WEDEL,  
(Very Rev.) ALEX. C. ZABRISKIE,  
WILLIAM L. BALTHIS,  
ALEXANDER GUERRY,  
JOHN C. SPAULDING,  
GEORGE F. THOMAS.

† The signature of Bishop Oldham of Albany is not affixed to either report as received from the Commission.

# Objections to the Proposed Basis of Union

## Minority Report of the Joint Commission on Approaches to Unity

WE, THE undersigned members of the Commission on Approaches to Unity, cannot sign the majority report nor recommend the Proposed Basis of Union to the Church for study because we judge that the proposals radically distort the religion of our Lord. We see no point in asking the Church to study for a period of years what we are certain would, if adopted, cause only disunity among ourselves and superficial unification with others.

I. We do not admit that the Commission was appointed, as has been asserted in

some quarters, merely to be a negotiating committee to accomplish union with the Presbyterians immediately and at any price. The Resolution of 1937 in regard to unity with the Presbyterians was passed unanimously and without debate. It is unthinkable that our Church could have voted to destroy its General Convention and to liquidate itself, all in the space of a few years, without at least some debate upon the subject and some opposition. The fact that there was no debate and no opposition is clear evidence that the resolution was not understood by the Church then as it has been interpreted by some recently.

Secondly, it would be a distinct act of

apostasy for our Church or any Church, to pledge itself to an act of unity blindfolded, by giving a blank cheque in regard to Christian faith and practice. That would be tantamount to saying that our religion is not concerned with belief and practice, and thus debase it to the plane of sentiment. We feel sure that our Church, by the Resolution of 1937, did not intend to degrade itself in this fashion and therefore we vigorously repudiate any "compulsion" under this resolution to accept without question whatever the Presbyterians may insist upon.

II. It has been said that the Presbyterians have accepted the episcopate. This



deny to be the case save in the most Lockwickian sense. The role of a bishop has indeed varied through the centuries and we have no desire to restrict the variety of its manifestations, but one fact has remained constant and unchanged. That fact is that only a bishop can validly ordain. From the years during which St. John was presumably still alive at Ephesus, there is the unbroken testimony through the centuries that the peculiar and necessary function of a bishop is to ordain. This the Presbyterians flatly deny by asserting that their ministry is on precisely the same foundation as an episcopally ordained ministry, and refusing even to accept a supplemental ordination of any kind. Some have urged that the Proposed formula for the Interim Period is really a supplemental ordination. We do not deny that by theological agility it might be so interpreted, but we are confident that it would be dishonest so to interpret when the Presbyterians have explicitly declared to our Commission that it is consistent with this interpretation that they will not accept it.

Further, they strenuously assert the parity of Orders. This phrase is not altogether familiar in our Church, but its meaning is that all ministers of the Church have absolutely the same spiritual power, and that no one has any more spiritual authority than any other. In other words, bishops, priests, and deacons are all on the same level of authority, and a bishop has no more spiritual power than a priest or a deacon. This principle has indeed been a historic Presbyterian principle and the Presbyterian Department frequently and strongly asserted it when we met. We were informed that parity of Orders is a fundamental Presbyterian conviction and that "we will never give it up." Further, in their desire for a unicameral assembly, they urge that such organization should be set up "because it expresses governmentally the parity of the clergy." Such doctrine has never been the doctrine of the Anglican communion and was one of the great points of conflict in the English Civil War between the Church and the Presbyterians. Even beyond this, the Presbyterian view of the ministry utterly rejects the Prayer Book idea of the priesthood. In their official publication "Why a Presbyterian Church" it is definitely asserted that a minister is in no sense a 'priest' beyond any other sincere Christian believer" (p. 17). It would be hard to find any doctrine of the Ministry more contradictory of what we have learned from our Prayer Book than this.

III. The proposals suggested would, if carried out, ultimately do away with our Prayer Book. It is true that for a certain period of years they allow the Presbyterians to continue their accustomed forms of worship and us to continue to use our Prayer Book. This, however, is only for a limited time. After that time, the new Church, with the Presbyterian element vastly outnumbering ours, will issue its own book of worship which will supersede all others. It is absurd to suppose that this large Presbyterian majority will continue to favor our historic Prayer Book against which they have fought so bitterly through the centuries. Hence, however this proposal may be camouflaged, it still remains that a vote for it is a vote ultimately to destroy our Prayer Book.

IV. The present proposals would automatically remove the Episcopal Church from the Anglican orbit of Churches and make it a member of the Presbyterian orbit of Churches. According to the announcements made in regard to the South India Plan, which is a far less radical scheme than these present proposals, the Anglican Church which accepts it is to be cut off from communion with Canterbury. Hence, were our proposals to go through, our Church would be out of communion with Canterbury and our bishops would not be invited to Lambeth. Even more, by these proposals, the new Church would be in communion with the Presbyterian Church of Scotland and so in communion with all the Presbyterian Churches throughout the world. In other words, these proposals would swing our Church definitely and unequivocally out of the Anglican Communion and make it a part of the Presbyterian Communion. We cannot feel that this is desirable.

#### SUMMARY

We regret that we cannot acquiesce in presenting the present proposals to the Church for study. We recognize that the majority report explicitly does not approve the proposals in any way, but merely presents them to the Church for study for three years. We know that several members of the majority group do not themselves approve of the proposals, but only agree to their presentation to the Church for study. Nevertheless, we cannot believe that it is right in the sight of God and in loyalty to His Church to ask the Church to study, with at least the possibility of accepting, what

we are profoundly convinced is repugnant to the mind of Christ.

We still feel that the two points which led many of us at an earlier stage to hope for some achievement in unity are entirely disregarded by these proposals. The first of these points is that anything considered in regard to the Presbyterians should be judged in the light of further possibilities of union with other communions. It is a patent fact that the present proposals would move us farther and farther from any of the great historic Catholic communions and that in fact we should become rather a laughing stock before the eyes of Christendom in any claim to be a "Bridge Church." We should have become merely one of several hundred other Protestant sects.

The second point upon which much has been spoken and written and of which we had hoped much was that union was to be achieved by all communions giving to the new Church what they themselves possessed and had found valuable. No communion was to give up, but every communion was to give. This is not the purport of the present proposals. The historic ministry of the Church as understood by the majority of Christians throughout the world, and the sacramental system authorized by our Church and binding us to that larger fellowship of Christians, these have not been given by us because they have not been accepted by the Presbyterians. The bishop has been transmuted into merely a permanent moderator. Any student of ecclesiastical institutions reading the present proposals impartially would come to only one conclusion, namely, that our Church had ceased to preserve its historic identity and had become a new kind of Presbyterian Church. Since we do not wish to participate in this change, we find ourselves unable to approve these proposals.

(Rt. Rev.) GOODRICH R. FENNER,  
(Rt. Rev.) HARWOOD STURTEVANT,  
(Very Rev.) CLAUDE W. SPROUSE,  
(Rev.) C. RANKIN BARNES,  
(Rev.) LEICESTER C. LEWIS,  
HOWARD T. FOULKES,  
JAMES G. MITCHELL.\*

\*Mr. Mitchell agrees with this report, but desires to supplement its findings.



## Not Unity But Surrender

**I**T IS with a heavy heart but an overwhelming sense of inner compulsion that we write this editorial. For the matter of Christian unity is very deep within our heart, as it must be in the case of all sincere followers of our Lord. But we are faced this week with the necessity of rejecting a proposal made in the name of Christian unity, because we are convinced that it would not actually be a step toward unity but the cause of further division and disunity.

During the past decade we have hoped and prayed that, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, this generation might see the achievement of a unity reaching across the lines that divide Christians of the Catholic and Protestant traditions, thus beginning to repair the great breach in Christendom begun in the 16th century. We have especially prayed and hoped that the healing of that breach might begin with the uniting of the American Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., through the continuing negotiations of the appointed commissions of these two Churches. We have in the past served on the Commission on Approaches to Unity, and have tried to make a contribution to that endeavor, and we have supported editorially that approach, even though we have had to disagree with certain specific proposals from time to time.

The publication this week of the majority and minority reports of the Commission on Approaches to Unity seems to mark the end of the hope of reunion in our generation. For the plan proposed by the majority would not be a unity stretching across Catholic-Protestant lines. It would be a unification marked by the surrender of the Catholic heritage of this Church, and by the acknowledged supremacy of the Protestant tradition.

In the words of the minority report, "these proposals would swing our Church definitely and unequivocally out of the Anglican Communion and make it a part of the Presbyterian Communion." The resulting body would not be, like the Episcopal Church today, a Church combining Catholic faith and order with Evangelical freedom and light. It would be a wholly Protestant body — the newest 20th century denomination — as the minority report puts it, "merely one of several hundred other Protestant sects."

The survival of interesting remnants from the past, in its nomenclature and certain of its customs — even the permitted use (for a time) of the Book of Common Prayer, on a voluntary basis — would not alter this fact. This would not be unity, but surrender.

Let us be entirely fair. The Commission has worked long and hard in its endeavor to find a basis of union with the Presbyterians. It has earnestly tried to bring forth from the treasury of both

Churches things new and old, and to reach a mutual agreement that might be acceptable to the majority of both communions. We honor the Commission for this effort. But compromise is not the way to Christian unity.

**I**T IS not enough to say that the united Church will continue to have bishops, when the office of bishop is so hedged about with restrictions that he becomes merely the presiding officer in a presbytery of ministers of equal rank. It is not enough to say that the Holy Communion shall always be celebrated with bread and wine, and with certain agreed ritual subdivisions, when the actual observance is left entirely to the discretion of the officiating minister. It is not enough to place the word "priest" in parenthesis after "presbyter" each time that word is used, or to talk of "a ministry continuous through the centuries," when some ministers consider their priesthood the acme of their ministry and others deny that they are priests at all, save in the general sense of the priesthood of all believers.

Moreover, in the desire to prevent the overriding of a congregation of either Church by the practices of the other, the Proposed Basis of Union abandons both Episcopacy and Presbyterianism in favor of Congregationalism, when it provides that "No change shall be made in the worship of any parish without the agreement of the pastor and congregation, and the approval of the bishop and presbytery." Thus, unless these four diverse elements agree in each local case, we may — indeed must, see some strange sights in the united Church. For example, the (ex-Episcopal) Church of St. Mary the Virgin will continue to have Solemn High Mass, perhaps with an ex-Presbyterian bishop pontificating when he comes to confirm, whether he likes it or not. And the First (ex-Presbyterian) Church will continue to observe the Lord's Supper, with unfermented wine served in individual cups to a sitting congregation, while an ex-Episcopal bishop, visiting on behalf of his presbytery to receive the profession of faith of new members, officiates whether he approves or not. Is this genuine Christian unity?

**T**HE SIGNERS of the minority report have taken the only course that seems to us right, for those who believe that not compromise but Catholicity is the only road to genuine Christian unity. They go behind the present proposals to "the two points which led many of us at an earlier stage to hope for some achievement in unity" — that any approach to the Presbyterians should be judged in the light of further possibilities of union with others, and that union should be achieved by all communions giving to the



ed Church what they themselves had found  
able.

The minority members reject the proposal to refer  
the several dioceses, for study, a plan which they  
not approve and which they know that the Church  
not approve, if it is to be loyal to its Catholic  
itage. They say clearly and unequivocally: "We  
not believe that it is right in the sight of God and  
loyalty to His Church to ask the Church to study,

with at least the possibility of accepting, what we are  
profoundly convinced is repugnant to the mind of  
Christ."

With that declaration we are fully in agreement.

We therefore call upon the bishops and the clerical  
and lay deputies, soon to be assembled in General  
Convention, to reject *in toto* the Proposed Basis of  
Union set forth in the majority report of the Com-  
mission on Approaches to Unity.

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